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Environment and sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 100 (see A/54/588, para. 2). Action on sub-item (e) was taken at the 22nd and 46th meetings, on 26 October and 3 December 1999. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/54/SR.22 and 46).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/54/L.8 and A/C.2/54/L.62

2. At the 22nd meeting, on 26 October, the representative of Guyana, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/54/L.8), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 53/191 of 15 December 1998 and other resolutions

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relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

"*Noting with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 19 of its resolution 52/198 of 18 December 1997, the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held at Dakar from 30 November to 11 December 1998,

"*Expressing its deep appreciation* to the Government of Senegal for the generous manner in which it hosted and provided facilities for the second session of the Conference of the Parties,

"*Expressing its deep appreciation also* to the Government of Brazil for the generous offer to host the third session of the Conference of the Parties,

"*Looking forward* to the continued efforts of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies in addressing desertification, land degradation and drought issues,

"*Noting with satisfaction* that an increasing number of countries and one regional economic integration organization have ratified or acceded to the Convention,

"*Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the second session of the Conference of the Parties and on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/191,

"1. *Welcomes* the convening of the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, at Recife, Brazil, from 15 to 26 November 1999;

"2. *Calls upon* all States and other actors to contribute effectively to the successful outcome of the third session of the Conference of the Parties;

"3. *Also calls upon* all remaining countries that are not yet parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible;

"4. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Convention secretariat was relocated to Bonn at the end of January 1999 and has begun functioning as the permanent secretariat of the Convention;

"5. *Underlines with serious concern* that, although the Global Mechanism started its activities in early 1999, it has not supported enabling activities under the Convention, particularly the elaboration of national reports to be submitted by African States parties at the third session of the Conference of the Parties;

"6. *Urges* the Global Mechanism, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its first and second sessions, to mobilize and channel financial resources to affected developing countries that are party to the Convention for the implementation of the Convention, including the elaboration of national reports;

"7. *Welcomes* the financial support already provided on a voluntary basis by some countries, and urges Governments, the private sector and all interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to make or to continue to make voluntary contributions necessary to ensure that the Global Mechanism achieves its objective effectively and fully;

"8. *Also welcomes* the contributions paid by some States parties, and calls upon all States parties that have not done so to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention envisaged in the financial

rules of the Conference of the Parties, so as to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference, the subsidiary bodies, the permanent secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

"9. *Further welcomes* the initial contribution made by the International Fund for Agricultural Development to the Special Resources for CCD Finance Account, and invites the Fund to make available as soon as possible the remaining balance to the Account, in conformity with its pledge made at the first session of the Conference of the Parties in Rome;

"10. *Invites* all other relevant organizations and programmes, particularly the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, to make similar contributions to the Special Resources for the CCD Finance Account, to enable the Global Mechanism to successfully support the implementation of the Convention;

"11. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Secretary-General, in conformity with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 52/198, closed, on 31 December 1998, the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund established under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 and transferred the amounts remaining in the Trust Fund and in the Special Voluntary Fund, respectively, to the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund established on 1 January 1999, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties;

"12. *Calls upon* Governments, multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties;

"13. *Decides* to finance from the regular programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 2000-2001 the conference-servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the fourth and fifth sessions of the Conference and meetings of its subsidiary bodies, in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2000-2001;

"14. *Notes with appreciation* that some affected developing countries and one region have adopted their national and regional action programmes, and therefore calls upon the international community to contribute to the implementation of those programmes through, *inter alia*, the conclusion of partnership agreements, including consideration of contributions from non-governmental organizations;

"15. *Invites* affected developing countries that have not yet adopted their national, subregional and regional action programmes to accelerate the process of the elaboration and adoption of their action programmes with a view to finalizing them no later than by the end of 2000;

"16. *Calls upon* the international community, in particular the developed countries and the United Nations system, and invites the multilateral financial institutions, the private sector and all other interested actors, to support the efforts of affected developing countries in the processes of elaborating and implementing action programmes to combat desertification, including, as appropriate, interregional programmes and platforms of cooperation, by providing them with financial resources and other forms of assistance;

"17. *Takes note* of the progress made through the informal consultations aimed at producing a draft additional regional implementation annex to the Convention, and urges countries from Eastern and Central Europe to take appropriate actions to become parties to the Convention, thereby facilitating the adoption of the additional regional implementation annex to the Convention by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session;

"18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution, as well as on the outcome of the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

"19. *Reminds* the States parties to the Convention that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/445 of 18 December 1997, beginning in the year 2000, the Conferences of the parties to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or established as a result of the Conference, as well as other conventions relating to sustainable development, shall take all appropriate measures to avoid convening their sessions and those of their subsidiary bodies during the sessions of the General Assembly;

"20. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth ordinary session the sub-item entitled 'Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa'."

3. At the 46th meeting, on 3 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Daúl Matute (Peru), introduced, on behalf of the Chairman, a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification" (A/C.2/54/L.62), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.8.

4. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee read out a statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution (see A/C.2/54/SR.46).

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.62 (see para. 7).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.62, draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.8 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/191 of 15 December 1998 and other relevant resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in

Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

Noting with satisfaction that, as indicated in paragraph 19 of its resolution 52/198 of 18 December 1997, the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held at Dakar from 30 November to 11 December 1998,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Senegal for the generous manner in which it hosted and provided facilities for the second session of the Conference of the Parties,

Expressing its deep appreciation also to the Government of Brazil for the generous offer to host the third session of the Conference of the Parties,

Welcoming the allocation of additional resources to the Global Mechanism by the Conference of the Parties at its third session,

Looking forward to the continued efforts of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies in addressing desertification, land degradation and drought issues,

Acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world and that joint action of the international community is needed to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought,

Stressing the need, *inter alia*, to integrate strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought,

Noting with satisfaction that an increasing number of countries and one regional economic integration organization have ratified or acceded to the Convention,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the second session of the Conference of the Parties and on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/191,[1]

1. *Welcomes* the convening of the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, at Recife, Brazil, from 15 to 26 November 1999;

2. *Calls upon* all States and other actors to contribute effectively to the successful outcome of the third session of the Conference of the Parties;

3. *Also calls upon* all remaining countries that are not yet parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible;

4. *Emphasizes* the importance of implementing the provisions of the Convention at all levels, including the general provisions and obligations of affected and developed countries;

5. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Convention secretariat was relocated to Bonn at the end of January 1999 and that it has begun functioning as the permanent secretariat of the Convention;

6. *Notes* that the Global Mechanism started its activities early in 1999, that it has not yet begun to fully support, *inter alia*, enabling activities under the Convention, and that resources have been made available to it, and invites the Global Mechanism to effectively develop all its activities and support under the Convention;

[1] A/54/96.

7. *Also notes* the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its third session related to the first review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism, and, in this context, urges donors, international organizations and the Global Mechanism, within its mandate, to support the preparation of national reports;

8. *Welcomes* the steps being taken by affected developing country parties, with the assistance of international organizations, to implement the Convention and the efforts being made to promote the participation of all actors of society in the elaboration of national, regional and subregional action programmes to combat desertification;

9. *Also welcomes* the efforts made by affected African country parties, developed country parties, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to produce and submit reports for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its third session;

10. *Requests* the Global Mechanism, in conformity with the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its first, second and third sessions, to effectively carry out its mandate of assisting affected developing country parties in the implementation of the Convention;

11. *Calls upon* the secretariat of the Convention and the Global Mechanism to cooperate fully in carrying out their activities as provided for in their respective mandates;

12. *Welcomes* the financial support already provided on a voluntary basis by some countries, and urges Governments, the private sector and all relevant organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to make or continue to make voluntary contributions to the Global Mechanism to enable it to effectively and fully implement its mandate;

13. *Also welcomes* the contributions paid by some country parties, and calls upon all parties that have not done so to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention envisaged in the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties,[2] so as to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference, the subsidiary bodies, the permanent secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

14. *Further welcomes* the initial contribution made by the International Fund for Agricultural Development to the Special Resources for the Convention to Combat Desertification Finance Account, and invites the Fund to make available as soon as possible the remaining balance to the Account, in conformity with its pledge made at the first session of the Conference of the Parties in Rome;

15. *Invites* all other relevant organizations and programmes, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and other members of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism, to also make contributions to enable the Global Mechanism to successfully support the implementation of the Convention;

16. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Secretary-General, in conformity with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 52/198, closed, on 31 December 1998, the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund established under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 and transferred the amounts

[2] ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1, decision 2/COP.1, annex, paras. 7-11.

remaining in the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund, respectively, to the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund established on 1 January 1999 in accordance with relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties;

17. *Calls upon* Governments, multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties;

18. *Decides* to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2000-2001 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the fourth and fifth ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies;

19. *Notes with appreciation* that some affected developing countries and one region have adopted their national and regional action programmes, and therefore calls upon the international community to contribute to the implementation of those programmes through, *inter alia*, the conclusion of partnership agreements, relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes that are available to implement the Convention and contributions from non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

20. *Invites* affected developing countries that have not yet adopted their national action programmes, and, where appropriate, regional and subregional action programmes, to accelerate the process of elaboration and adoption of their action programmes with a view to finalizing them no later than the end of 2000;

21. *Calls upon* the international community, in particular the developed countries and the United Nations system, and invites the multilateral financial institutions, the private sector and all other interested actors to support the efforts of affected developing countries in the processes of elaborating and implementing action programmes to combat desertification, including, as appropriate, interregional programmes and platforms of cooperation by providing them with financial resources and other forms of assistance;

22. *Welcomes* the progress made in producing a draft additional regional implementation annex to the Convention for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe with a view to adopting it at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties, and invites those countries to continue their efforts towards acceding to the Convention;

23. *Encourages* the conferences of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, to further examine appropriate opportunities and measures to strengthen the complementarities and improve scientific assessments of ecological linkages among the three conventions;

24. *Also encourages* the secretariats of various environmental and environment-related conventions and other international organizations, with full respect for the statutes of the respective convention secretariats and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties to the conventions

concerned, to strengthen cooperation with a view to facilitating progress in their implementation at the international, regional, subregional and national levels;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution, as well as on the outcome of the third session of the Conference of the Parties;

26. *Reminds* the States parties to the Convention that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/445 of 18 December 1997, beginning in 2000, the conferences of the parties to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or established as a result of the Conference, as well as other conventions relating to sustainable development, shall take all appropriate measures to avoid convening their sessions and those of their subsidiary bodies during the sessions of the General Assembly;

27. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa".